

Secretary Rusk Holds Press and Radio News Briefing at Los Angeles

Secretary Rusk, who was in Los Angeles on February 13 for a regional foreign policy conference, held a press and radio news briefing at the Biltmore Hotel that day. Following a brief introduction by Robert J. Manning, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, the briefing proceeded as follows.

Press release 90 dated February 15

Secretary Rusk: I do want to express my appreciation to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, to Town Hall, and to a number of distinguished citizens here who have made the regional conference which we have been holding possible. I'm looking forward to the closing meeting this evening.¹

I will have to say to you that I have been away from both tickers and cables for about 24 hours and there may be one or two points on which I am not quite up to date, but I will be glad to have your questions.

Q. Mr. Secretary, I wonder if you would explain to us why it is seemingly proper for us to have missile bases in Turkey and Italy but improper for the Soviet Government to have them in Cuba.

A. Well, the military establishment of NATO is directly related to the military establishment of the Soviet Union. Now, back in 1946, we had no allies, except those that were formed to defeat Germany and Japan. And those alliances were expected to disappear.

Now, the pressures by the Soviet Union into the free world against Western Europe in such areas as Greece, the seizure of Czechoslovakia, the Berlin blockade—all these pressures alerted the free world to the fact that they must or-

ganize themselves for their own defense. This gave birth to NATO.

Now, the military problem of NATO is directly related to the military establishment of the Soviet Union. So that the question of bases has to do with what is on the other side. The Soviet Union has bases that are looking down the throat of Western Europe and other neighbors, and if those areas are to be protected it means that armed force must be available in those areas. So there is no connection between the necessity for NATO bases in NATO and the intrusion of missile bases into this hemisphere.

The Question of Cuba

Q. Mr. Secretary, about Cuba, is the political criticism, the current criticism concerning Cuba, actually forcing a change of administration policy?

A. Well, I think that the type of discussion not only is inevitable but important, but I don't believe that the main lines of policy can be affected by the day-to-day debate that goes on. The Cuban story is a long story, and there is plenty of room in it for all sorts of partisan debate. It goes back many years.

But this is not the point these days. We, the United States, have a serious problem with respect to Cuba. Now, we can look back through two administrations and find that other steps might have been taken or that something might have been done differently that might have made that situation different than it is today. But this is something in which we are all involved.

Now, the Cuban question poses a problem for the United States, its allies in the hemisphere, its allies in NATO. As far as the hemisphere is concerned, there is, I think, today

¹ For text of an address made by Secretary Rusk at the regional conference that evening, see BULLETIN of Mar. 4, 1963, p. 311.

more than ever, a deep realization of what Cuba means to the hemisphere. This solidarity and unanimity of the hemisphere with respect to missiles last fall¹ is a clear indication of this. The action being taken in the various countries of the hemisphere, both individually and jointly, to move in on any kind of subversive activities that come out of Cuba is another sign of this concern.

The isolation of Cuba that is growing, economically, psychologically, politically, is part of the general campaign to make it clear that Cuba is not going to be permitted to be a base for aggression in this hemisphere, that Castroism is not an answer to the understandable demands of the people of the hemisphere for economic and social advancement, and that this intrusion of this hemisphere from outside cannot be accepted by the hemisphere as an object of policy.

Q. But is the criticism done locally in the United States—a sort of forcing a speedup or change in administration policy?

A. No, because the administration itself is as much concerned about Cuba as anybody else in the country. This is the important point. And we—

Q. Mr. Rusk—

A.—and we undertook,—President Kennedy undertook—the gravest decisions last October because of the large risk that was suddenly appearing in the buildup in Cuba. This is not something on which there is a proper partisan difference on the object. The question is what is the wisest to do and how can the result be accomplished in a world that is full of danger.

Q. Mr. Secretary—

A. Yes?

Q. What's your comment to the criticism that we have lost the initiative that we had last October vis-a-vis Russia in the Cuban situation?

A. The outtraffic from Cuba is the important thing. Last October missiles moved out, bombers moved out, some Soviet military forces

moved out. We want to see additional Soviet forces move out because, as I will indicate in my remarks this evening, the presence of those forces there cannot provide safety for Cuba. They create danger for Cuba and in this hemisphere so long as they are there. We would like to see that outtraffic continue, and we shall be watching very carefully the next few weeks to see whether in fact they will continue.

Solid Foundation of Western Alliance

Q. Mr. Rusk—

A. Yes?

Q. James Reston makes a very strange remark in his column today; he says, "The President is in trouble now, not because his major foreign policies have failed but because they are succeeding." He says that fear in the Western Alliance has abated and without fear a whole new set of problems has arisen requiring new policies and new criticisms. Would you comment on that, Sir?

A. Well, I think that in the longest range sense the presence of an immediate and overriding common danger is a great unifying factor in the world. Now, I do think that after the October crisis it was evident that the other side had entered into a period of sobriety, that the danger did not appear to be so intense. Therefore we could afford to perhaps argue among ourselves a little more. Let me illustrate that point another way. I have been impressed with the fact that on two critical decisions that I knew about, participated in—the Korean decision in 1950 and the Cuban decision of last October—that at the moment of danger there is not nearly so much neutralism in the world as one would suppose that nations all over the world do basically understand what this country is all about. They understand the difference between what this country is all about and what the Soviet Union is after. And in moments of crisis they wish us well. This appeared in Korea; it appeared in October.

Now, when the danger has passed, then they can return to a more— from their point of view—a more normal state of affairs. But I think it is true that this discussion we are having in the West about not whether the alliance is solid or not, and about the alliance as

¹ The text of an OAS resolution of Oct. 23, see *DET.*, Nov. 12, 1962, p. 722.

late as October we had the clear evidence of the most solid foundation there, and if the other side made the mistake of supposing there were cracks in the alliance, it would be the mistake of their lives.

But what we are doing is trying to decide how you write the next chapter, and all along, from the birth of NATO itself, the admission of Greece and Turkey and Germany, the discussion of the European Defense Community, when we talk about how to build the next chapter, differences among sovereign states appear and we have a great deal of discussion about it.

But these are going to be dissolved, and there is no problem about the unity of the alliance in the face of the threat in the Soviet Union.

Q. Sir, are you concerned at all over the continuing barrage of criticisms by the Republicans over the Cuban policies of the administration? Does this alarm you in any sense?

A. Oh, I think that we regularly and, I'll say, during the week of the Lincoln Day speeches we are going to have some vigorous discussion in this country. We ought to have, and every 2 years and every 4 years we have a great debate in this country. Now, I think if I were deeply concerned about the factor of debate I should not be in my present post. But what's important is that the main lines of American foreign policy, since 1945, have been worked out on a bipartisan basis, both in the Executive and in cooperation between members of both parties in the Congress. We have a good many Republicans working with us in the present administration and in the Congress.

You remember in the 80th Congress every report that came out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during the 80th Congress came out unanimously under the chairmanship of Senator Vandenberg. From the foreign policy point of view that was one of the creative Congresses in our history, and on the domestic policy people of that day had some other things to say about the 80th Congress, but basically it is bipartisan.

Q. Do you anticipate another period of tension such as we experienced last October, and do you think the world is ready to face this all over again?

A. The situation, such as that in Cuba—and there would be situations in other parts of the world—is full of danger. I must say that one does not plan to go through that kind of experience often. But there are dangers there, and the dangers will have to be faced if they materialize and they become a threat to the peace of the world or to the security of the United States.

But I would not want to predict exactly in what way and in what form or when this kind of situation may occur. We would hope, as we always do, that the vital interest of the United States can be protected by peaceful means. That is the basic objective and has and must be for any rational government in the modern world.

Q. Do you not feel public sentiment is ready for another crisis such as last fall?

A. Well, these are matters that go to the life and death of nations. I think that this too has to be taken into account in public discussion and in what you call public sentiment. And these are matters, I think, on which the role of the President is crucial, and it's a lonely and awful role that the President has to fill in these great decisions of war and peace. And I would think that the demonstration of his resoluteness last October would be a matter of great comfort to Americans and that they could understand that if he felt that this country were in danger he would act accordingly.

Administration of Foreign Aid

Q. Mr. Secretary, your foreign aid director, David Bell, said today that there would be some new tough lines in administering foreign aid programs. I wonder if you could describe exactly what tough lines the administration has in mind.

A. Well, one has to be a little careful because when we talk to our own people there are at least three other audiences listening in—our allies, the unaligned countries, and the Soviet bloc. But I believe myself that foreign aid, a substantial foreign aid program, is vital to the security and the well-being of our own country. But I also believe that in good conscience we have to be in a position to go to our own people

Our policy there is not that we put in enough boys to do every bit of the job ourselves but that we do what we can to put the Vietnamese in a position to win that war, and they are beginning to win it. It's going to be a long and tough and frustrating and mean war, as any guerrilla operation of that sort has been in the past, whether in Greece or in Malaya.

But there is no—I think it would do some 10,000 or 11,000 men out there a disservice to think this is a "no-win" policy. They are working with great gallantry and under great difficulties. And the Vietnamese are too.

Q. Will the American soldiers be used to any other capacities than they are being used at present?

A. We believe in the meritoriousness of the training and effectiveness and mobility and capacity of the Vietnamese forces; that this is a problem that so far, unless there's escalation from the other side, this is a problem that can be handled by the forces now in being.

Q. Mr. Secretary?

A. Yes?

Q. Would you comment for us on debating what you mean by the presence of Russian troops posing a danger to Cuba itself? What does that mean? And, secondly, would you care to say whether or not present Republican criticism of the Government's Cuban policy constitutes a breach of our traditional bipartisan foreign policy?

A. Well, I think that, where Soviet forces are in Cuba, this catches Cuba up into worldwide considerations, worldwide confrontations, which expose Cuba to that overriding confrontation between the Soviet Union and the free world. I would think that Cuba would be safer without Soviet troops than with them.

Q. You mean safer from the United States?

A. Safer in every respect, in every respect.

Q. Mr. Secretary, is the current quarrel between Russia and China good news to the West?

A. We have been very cautious about interpreting this split as good news. Basically the objectives of the two sides remain the same. They both want to bury us. There are some

differences of approach, technique, doctrine. There is a struggle for leadership between Peking and Moscow. But I think we have to assume, for all practical purposes, that Peking and Moscow do depend upon each other in the event of a major confrontation with the free world. And I have not seen anything in this split yet that runs counter to that.

Now, they will have—I gather that the most recent reports are that they are expressing great friendship toward each other in the last day or two in connection with recent anniversaries. But I think we just have to wait and see. There is confusion among Communist parties in many countries. There are some strains within the bloc. All this is to the good. But I think we would be guilty of a great deal of wishful thinking if we assume this present situation has relieved us of many of our problems.

Flow of Information

Q. Mr. Secretary, does the Government have criteria or does it improvise judgments with reference to when a crisis requires further restraint of news sources and the flow of information? Are there criteria that may be made public so we understand this process of news management better, or is this a matter of improvised judgment as situations develop?

A. Well, I don't know of any period except those 5 or 6 days during the Cuban crisis between the Monday, the 15th, and Monday, the 22d of October, when we deliberately withheld important information, because it was vitally important that, when that information was released, the action to be taken in connection with that information be announced at the same time. There are a lot of reasons for that, but we felt that they were very important.

In the first instance, we wanted to be absolutely certain that we had hard information and the coverage of the island during that week was complete, and we felt that when President Kennedy spoke on October 22d⁴ he did have full and complete information about the situation on the island.

Now, as far as the rest of it is concerned, the secrets are almost literally nonexistent. We

⁴For text, see *ibid.*, Nov. 12, 1962, p. 715.

have a very capable and active and professional press corps in Washington, who not only know how to dig out information but also who know what's going on without having to ask an officer of government at every stage because he can read events and read what's said by various governments and put all these things together. There are a few technical secrets that are not disclosed. And from day to day or week to week, there are intergovernmental talks, private in nature, which are not fully exposed because to do so would frustrate the very purpose of the talks. But policy and action in this country are not secret. They are public. So that I think that, with the exception of those 6 or 7 days there in October, this question of management of news does not apply to the Department of State.

Now I won't go into the question of how difficult it is to keep a secret even if you wanted to. So I think the press is pretty well serviced.

West New Guinea

Q. The Government of Malaya today announced a military buildup in the activities of the Indonesians. In the light of the U.S. position in the settlement of the West Irian dispute, I wonder how you would characterize recent Indonesian activities in North Borneo and whether this gives you any cause to regret our participation in the West Irian dispute.

A. I think if those who are to take part in the Malaysia Federation do so on a basis of consent, as is now the case, and on the basis of arrangements which are within their own jurisdiction and control, that if anyone on the outside attempts by force or threat of force to interfere with those, this would create a very serious problem.

Now, the West New Guinea thing, I think, is a rather different question because there had been hanging over since 1949 a dispute between Indonesia and the Netherlands about West New Guinea. There had been an original agreement at the time of the independence of Indonesia to negotiate that question—that is the question of the independence of West New Guinea during the following year. Those

negotiations never really took place seriously and never produced any result, but there was a genuine dispute there about West New Guinea, and I think the settlement that was reached represented the real national policies of both parties to that dispute. But I think the Malaysian situation would be quite different.

Q. Mr. Rusk, you mentioned not much publicity in connection with lopping off certain foreign aid projects. Is that because the Department doesn't want it to be publicized, or because the Washington reporters don't ask, or what?

A. No, a part of it is based upon administrative decisions about whether a particular project is paying off. Therefore you simply withdraw it. But you don't make a great to-do about it because there are other things going on that are paying off and should be followed.

Q. Would that be managed news then? If you stop a program and don't—

A. No. For example, I don't believe that it's up to us. For example, if we withdraw a man for incompetence, I don't think it's up to us to announce that to everybody, that we are withdrawing this particular aid official for incompetence. No one else in the country does that when they fire somebody for incompetence. Our Government is somewhat different, but I just don't think it's a responsible way to conduct public business.

Now, reporters do get into those situations abroad and at home and a good deal of this is known, but this is not a case of managed news. It's just that it's a part of the normal operation of government. A thousand cables go out of the Department of State every day, and I would suppose that 980 of those don't make up news.

Q. Mr. Rusk, can the problem of British entry into the Common Market be solved as long as De Gaulle remains President of France?

A. Well, I suppose that, if France continues to take the view that Britain is not ripe for membership in the Common Market, in a technical sense France can stop the membership of Britain into the Common Market. But there are vast and important trade relationships be-